

Message Text

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S E C R E T OTTAWA 2138

E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJECT: CANADIAN NATO CONSULTATONS WITH US AND FRG

REF: (A) STATE 132105; (B) OTTAWA 2129; (C) SECTO 02080

1. FURTHER TO REF (B) EXTAFF DEFENCE RELATIONS DIRECTOR MARSHALL SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIRMED TO POL COUNSELOR THAT GOC THINKING IS TO HOLD CONSULTATIONS IN BRUSSELS "UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NATO PERMREPS." GOC WAS STILL DEBATING WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE SEPARATE BILATERALS WITH US AND FRG OR WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE TRILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. (ROBINSON WAS QUITE DEFINITE, AS WAS CADIEUX, ABOUT BI-LATERAL NATURE OF DISCUSSIONS; HOWEVER, MARSHALL OBSERVED THAT ROBINSON AND CADIEUX SOMEWHAT REMOVED FROM WORKING LEVEL DISCUSSIONS OF SUBJECT.) THESE GOC CONSULTATION PLANS HAD BEEN TRIGGERED BY "BUTTONHOLING" OF TRUDEAU BY FRG CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AT SUMMIT FROM WHICH RESULTED AGREEMENT TO CONSULT AND AGREEMENT ON BRUSSELS AS VENUE. ON TIMING, MARSHALL INDICATED THAT ALL INTERESTED GOC ELEMENTS HAD YET TO BE "BROUGHT ON BOARD" AND HE ANTICIPATED THAT PROPOSAL TO US AND FRG ON CONSULTATION WOULD BE FORTHCOMING IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS WITH SCHEDULING OF TALKS THEREAFTER TO BE MUTUALLY DECIDED.

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2. MARSHALL INDICATED THAT BRUSSELS CONSULTATIONS ENVISAGED TALKS ONLY ON NATO ASPECT OF CANADIAN DEFENSE REVIEW. THIS WOULD NOT PRECLUDE, HE SAID, BILATERAL US-GOC CONSULTATIONS ON OTHER ASPECTS OF DEFENSE REVIEW SUBSEQUENT TO BRUSSELS MEETINGS AND IN OTHER VENUE.

3. COMMENT: WE CAN SEE SOME VALUE TO TRILATERAL DISCUSSIONS PARTICULARLY IF IT CAN BE SO ARRANGED THAT CANADIANS EMERGE IMPRESSED BY UNANIMITY OF US AND FRG CLEAR PREFERENCE FOR MIXED LAND-AIR, ALL-AIR, OR ALL-LAND OPTION FOR CANADIAN NATIONA CONTINGENT. TRILATERAL WOULD ALSO ENHANCE EFFECTIVENESS OF US-FRG JOINT URGING FOR GREATER CANADIAN CONTRIBUTION THAN IN PAST. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE IMPRESSED BY FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE EXPRESSED BY TRUDEAU (PARA 40 REF C), ESPECIALLY HIS PLEDGE ON BEHALF CANADA "TO MAINTAIN A NATO FORCE LEVEL WHICH IS ACCEPTED BY OUR ALLIES AS BEING ADEQUATE IN SIZE AND EFFECTIVE IN CHARACTER." WE SUSPECT THAT PART OF EXPLANATION FOR THIS MAY WELL BE RECOGNITION ON TRUDEAU'S PART THAT CANADIAN NATO PERFORMANCE MAY HAVE DISTINCT BEARING ON ACCEPTABILITY OF "CONTRACTUAL LINK" TO EC MINISTERS. THIS SUGGESTS THAT URGINGS FROM US AND FRG FOR GREATER CANADIAN NATO CONTRIBUTION MIGHT HAVE BETTER CHANCE OF SUCCESS NOW THAN IN RECENT YEARS.

4. WE SEE SOME DIFFICULTIES IN HOLDING TRILATERAL TALKS, EXCLUDING OTHER NATO MEMBERS, HELD AT NATO HEADQUARTERS. ALSO, TRILATERAL DISCUSSIONS MIGHT MAKE IT SOMEWHAT MORE DIFFICULT FOR US TO ATTEMPT USE BRUSSELS CONSULTATIONS TO PRESS FOR DETAILS OF NON-NATO ASPECTS OF CANADIAN DEFENSE REVIEW. HOWEVER, IN ANY CASE GOC IS CLEARLY UNDER MARCHING ORDERS FROM TRUDEAU TO CONSULT, AND, RATHER THAN RISK BLUNTING THIS INITIATIVE BY MAKING SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING FORMAT FOR CONSULTATIONS, WE FEEL IT PREFERABLE TO LEAVE THAT TO CANADIANS. AT LEAST WE WILL HAVE THEM AT THE CONSULTATION TABLE BEFORE DEFENSE REVIEW DECISIONS TAKEN BY GOC CABINET.

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